

NUCLEAR WASTE STORAGE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, more than 15 years ago, Congress directed the Department of Energy (DOE) to take responsibility for the disposal of nuclear waste created by commercial nuclear power plants and our nation's defense programs. Today, there are more than 100,000 tons of spent nuclear fuel that must be dealt with. Over a year has now passed since the DOE was absolutely obligated under the NWPA of 1982 to begin accepting spent nuclear fuel from utility sites. Today DOE is no closer in coming up with a solution. This is unacceptable. This is in fact wrong—so say the Federal Courts. The law is clear, and DOE must meet its obligation. If the Department of Energy does not live up to its responsibility, Congress will act.

I am encouraged that Congressmen BLILEY, BARTON, UPTON, and the rest of the House of Representatives have begun to address this issue. It is good to see a bipartisan effort for a safe, practical and workable solution for America's spent fuel storage needs. The proper storage of spent fuel is not a partisan issue—it is a safety issue. The solution being advanced is certainly more responsible than just leaving waste at 105 separate power plants in 34 states all across the nation. There are 29 sites which will reach their storage capacity by the end of this year.

Where is DOE? Where is the solution? All of America's experience in waste management over the last twenty-five years of improving environmental protection has taught Congress that safe, effective waste handling practices entail using centralized, permitted, and controlled facilities to gather and manage accumulated waste.

Mr. President, the management of used nuclear fuel should capitalize on this knowledge and experience. Nearly 100 communities have spent fuel sitting in their "backyard," and it needs to be gathered and accumulated. This lack of a central storage capacity could very possibly cause the closing of several nuclear power plants. These affected plants produce nearly 20% of America's electricity. Closing these plants just does not make sense.

Nuclear energy is a significant part of America's energy future, and must remain part of the energy mix. America needs nuclear power to maintain our secure, reliable, and affordable supplies of electricity. Nuclear power, at the same time, allows the nation to directly and effectively address increasingly stringent air quality requirements.

Both the House and the Senate passed a bill in the 105th Congress to require the DOE to build this interim storage site in Nevada, but unfortunately this bill didn't complete the legislative process because of time constraints. We ran out of time. I challenge my colleagues in both chambers

of the 106th Congress to get this environmental bill done. The citizens, in some 100 communities where fuel is stored today, challenge the Congress to act and get this bill done. The nuclear industry has already committed to the federal government about \$15 billion toward building the facility. In fact, the nuclear industry continues to pay about \$650 million a year in fees for storage of spent fuel. It is time for the federal government to honor its commitment to the American people and the power community. It is time for the federal government to protect those 100 communities.

To ensure that the federal government meets its commitment to states and electricity consumers, the 106th Congress must mandate completion of this program—a program that includes temporary storage, a site for permanent disposal, and a transportation infrastructure to safely move used fuel from plants to the storage facility.

Mr. President, this federal foot dragging is unfortunate and unacceptable. Clearly, the only remedy to stopping these continued delays is timely action in the 106th Congress on this legislation. By moving this process, which must also include the work of the Senate, the House's work can be improved. Let's move forward and get this bill done.

COMMENDING ABHISHEK GUPTA

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to praise the outstanding accomplishments of a distinguished young man from Florida. At the age of 17, Abhishek Gupta has succeeded in making a greater contribution towards the alleviation of pain and suffering on a global scale than most people can boast of in a lifetime. Last November, Abhishek organized 9 other students and initiated a project designed to provide humanitarian relief to underprivileged citizens in his Southern Florida community and throughout the world.

In a rare exemplification of compassion and determination, Abhishek, a junior at Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire, created a non-profit organization called "Clothes, Food and Education for the Poor and Needy." Drawing on Abhishek's inspiration, this group worked toward the goal of raising \$50,000 to provide crucial relief for numerous families about whom Abhishek had read in several local newspaper articles.

Abhishek went to work lobbying corporate sponsors to pay for operational expenses, and entreating members of his community to help him meet his goal. Ultimately, he exceeded his own expectations by raising \$60,000 in a matter of weeks. He channeled this money toward helping impoverished children in Southern Florida and victims of Hurricane Mitch in Central America.

Mr. President, I have always believed that the most effective way to give charity is to give time—money comes second. I want to stress that Abhishek did not only formulate the infrastructure for raising such a lofty sum, he also spent part of his Christmas vacation accompanying a medical team to Honduras and Nicaragua in order to contribute personally. During his week in Central America, Abhishek helped administer food, clothing and medical supplies to the disaster victims, and provided direct medical aid to nearly 600 patients who were in dire need of treatment.

"Clothes, Food and Education for the Poor and Needy" is continuing to collect donations for relief of the downtrodden, and I commend Abhishek Gupta for his dedication to such a worthy cause. It is rare that so young a citizen can play such a direct role in both reducing human pain and suffering, and providing inspiration to old and young alike.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, April 28, 1999, the federal debt stood at \$5,598,229,787,052.49 (Five trillion, five hundred ninety-eight billion, two hundred twenty-nine million, seven hundred eighty-seven thousand, fifty-two dollars and forty-nine cents).

One year ago, April 28, 1998, the federal debt stood at \$5,512,794,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred twelve billion, seven hundred ninety-four million).

Five years ago, April 28, 1994, the federal debt stood at \$4,564,295,000,000 (Four trillion, five hundred sixty-four billion, two hundred ninety-five million).

Ten years ago, April 28, 1989, the federal debt stood at \$2,756,668,000,000 (Two trillion, seven hundred fifty-six billion, six hundred sixty-eight million) which reflects a doubling of the debt—an increase of almost \$3 trillion—\$2,841,561,787,052.49 (Two trillion, eight hundred forty-one billion, five hundred sixty-one million, seven hundred eighty-seven thousand, fifty-two dollars and forty-nine cents) during the past 15 years.

SENATOR DAVID PRYOR—HELPING THE REFUGEES AND INSPIRING US ALL

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, our former colleague in the Senate from Arkansas, David Pryor, has a new mission, and I believe that all of us will be greatly inspired by his commitment and dedication.

During the spring term this year, Senator Pryor has been a fellow at the Institute of Politics in the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Last week, touched by the